

Virginia State Animal Response Team

Sample Plan for Starting a Community Animal Response Team (CART)

I. Identify a CART leader

This person will be responsible for overseeing team activities and development.

General responsibilities include:

1. Working with the locality's emergency manager to integrate an animal response plan into the local emergency plan.
2. Meeting with the local emergency manager on a regular basis to seek guidance and share ideas concerning training opportunities, especially those that could include both local animal and human health responders.
3. Notifying the VA SART Office of the formation of the team and its capabilities via completion of the CART General Information and Response Capabilities Statement either on the website, letter or email.
4. Leading the team effort of identifying local, physical resources that could be utilized as part of an emergency response involving animals.
5. Leading the team effort of identifying support agencies from which the CART may draw members and with which the CART may be coordinating activities.

II. Identify all possible local resources and support personnel

1. Supporting agencies (any group or other agency that could lend support in carrying out a specific duty related to emergency response and/or emergency response related to animals).

Examples include:

Department of Agriculture
Animal Control
Local Cooperative Extension
Local Veterinary Association
Local Emergency Management
County/city board of supervisors
Local humane groups
Local Veterinary Practitioners
Local rescue organizations
Local equine and livestock associations
Local dog and cat breeders
Local health department
Local National Guard units
Local wildlife organizations and/or rehabilitators
Virginia Animal Control Association
Virginia Animal Fighting Task Force
Service Animal Organizations

2. Physical resources

Private and public shelters/pounds

Boarding Kennels

Boarding stables

Agricultural centers

Private or county/city owned multipurpose/community centers

Civic group lodges

Veterinary practices

Pet stores

Agricultural supply stores

Tack and saddlery stores

Grooming facilities

Companion animal daycare facilities

III. Gather Information and Set Goals/Objectives

1. Determine the type and kind of resources available to your CART
2. Determine if any formal, written agreements or memoranda of understanding will need to be developed in association with any facilities or supply sources your CART may wish to use in an emergency.
3. Determine the type and kind of services your CART will be able to offer
4. Estimate the length of time your CART could offer services in response to a local emergency before requiring additional help.
5. Identify any animal emergency response plans that have already been developed by any local partners/supporting agencies and ask for a copy of that plan.

IV. Perform Needs Assessment and Develop a Written Plan

1. Perform a needs assessment of your locality in regard to the type and kind of animal services that would be needed in an emergency.
2. Generate a list of all physical resources the team will need to support its response goals including details concerning how supplies, pharmaceuticals and equipment will be stored, maintained and organized.
3. Review your locality's emergency response plan and then work with your locality's emergency manager to write or update the animal response aspect of this plan.

Plan writing suggestions:

- Should be written/coordinated with Local Emergency Management using the same software and format as the existing locality plan if possible
- May include specific policies and operating procedures
- Should detail specifics in regard to plan activation
- Should be specific in regard to duties and abilities of animal care responders
- Should be specific in regard to support groups' duties and abilities in regard to animal care responders
- Should be written with all hazards in mind, but with priority given to those hazards that are most likely in your locality

- Should be written with job/functional titles, not names, included
4. Consider writing a more detailed plan specifically for your CART use depending on the level of detail possible/appropriate in the local emergency response plan. Recommendations in regard to information to be included in this plan include:
- Contact information for all members
 - Local emergency support contact information (including 911)
 - Local public health contact information
 - Local cooperative extension contact information
 - Local environmental quality contact information
 - Contact information for all local animal related facilities (i.e. veterinary hospitals, boarding kennels, zoos, boarding stables etc.,)
 - Evacuation plan
 - Transportation plan for pet evacuation
 - Transportation plan for special needs individuals with pets
 - Transportation plan/guidance for horse and livestock owners
 - Alternate plans to fulfill emergency response capabilities if facility evacuation is necessary (i.e. due to loss of utility services, physical damage etc.,)
 - Protocol for intake, admission and/or registration of animals into shelters or field hospitals including a plan for identifying animals and the procedure by which animals will be released from the facility
 - Documentation protocols in regard to animal inventory, veterinary medical records and responder/owner/caretaker injury
 - Disposal plan for medical waste and carcasses
 - Communications plan
 - Activation and deactivation plans
 - Plan review and update intervals
 - Public information plan/coordination with lead agency
 - Referral plan for cases that require more advanced or prolonged care

V. Additional Considerations and Long Term Goals

1. Planning/participating in exercises in order to exercise the plan and/or interface with other local responders
2. Recruitment efforts/initiatives
3. Public education about CART and animal emergency response
4. Media education about CART and animal emergency response
4. Cultivating and maintaining relationships with local private and government partners to build consensus and manage dissent in regard to animal emergency response

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